

A SHORT
ACCOUNT

OF THE
S T A T E
OF OUR

Woollen Manufacturies,

FROM THE
PEACE of *Ryswick* to This Time.

S H E W I N G,

Their Former *Flourishing*, and their Present *Ruinous*
Condition; and that they always flourished when
FRANCE could not get our *Wool*, but declined in
Proportion to the Quantities of *Wool* Exported
to them.

To which is added

An *Effectual* S C H E M E to prevent the
Exportation of our W O O L,

B Y A N
UNIVERSAL REGISTRY.

L O N D O N:

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A SHORT
ACCOUNT

OF THE
S T A T E
OF OUR

Woolen Manufacture

FROM THE

Report of the

Committee

of the House of Commons
on the Report of the
Committee of the House of Commons
on the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons
on the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons

TO WHICH

IS APPENDED
A SUMMARY OF THE

BY A

UNIVERSAL

LONDON

Printed by

of the

NOTICE

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD-MAYOR,

The Right Worshipful the
Court of ALDERMEN,

And the Worthy
COMMON-COUNCIL,
OF THE
CITY of L O N D O N.

My Lord and Gentlemen,

A Fellow Citizen and Fellow
Trader respectfully and affection-
ately addresses you, to desire your
Patronage of the following Narrative,
and your Assistance to forward the
Design mention'd in it. I am induc'd
to make This Application to You, by
your eminent Zeal on all Occasions for
the Publick Welfare, and by the Na-
ture of my Request to you. No Man

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can

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can reasonably doubt of a favourable Reception from you, if he comes in behalf of his Country: And, My Lord and Gentlemen, I do not ask you to patronize any Thing of a trifling Nature, but a Matter of national, of universal, of the most important Concern, to You, to the whole Kingdom, and to His Majesty. The great Source of the Wealth and Strength of this Trading Nation, which are the *Safety* of the Nation and the Support of the Government, are our *Woollen Manufacturies*. The total Decay of *Them* must be attended with the Destruction of the Kingdom, and the Subversion of the Constitution. If we, by the Loss of our STAPLE Trade, continue every Day to grow poorer and weaker, while FRANCE, by gaining it, grows every Day richer and stronger, they will soon be as able, as they are always ready, to prescribe Laws to Us. The *Exportation* of our *Wool* to *France* is the chief Cause of *our* Weakness and *their* Strength. By the Help of our *Wool* they

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they have been enabled to improve their Manufacturies, and by being able to work cheaper than we can possibly do, they have under-fold and sup-
planted us in *Foreign* Markets. An effectual Remedy for this fatal Evil has been often studied, but never before in-
vented. My Lord and Gentlemen, I here offer you one, which I may venture to call an effectual one, because allowed, by all Persons acquainted with Trade, and not denied, to be such, by any of the *Ministry*; and by the Help of which I will undertake, under any Penalty, to bring, from *Foreigners*, into the *Treasury*, a Million yearly, and into the Interest of *Land* and *Trade*, above seven Millions; so that the King and his Subjects have lost above sixty Millions, and *France* have gain'd above twice as much, by my Scheme's not being accepted when I first offer'd it, near nine Years ago, recommended by the Hands of above 600,000 Traders. His Majesty, when I applied to him, was most graciously
pleas'd

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pleas'd to give Directions to the *Attorney General* to report or form a Charter, but an Act of Parliament being thought to be necessary, I have ever since been making a fruitless Application for such an Act, tho' my Scheme is so greatly beneficial to his Majesty and to the Nation. I have often attempted in vain to get Access to his Majesty, in order to represent to him the true State of our Trade, and the dangerous Consequences of it; for I have either been refus'd Admittance, or, if admitted, not allowed Time to speak to his Majesty. For these Reasons, My Lord and Gentlemen, I most importunately intreat you, not for *my* Sake, but for your *own* Sakes, for your *Family's*, for your *Country's*, for your *King's*, that you would *Petition* the Parliament, *Or Address* the Throne, that I may be heard, and my Scheme considered. If I be only a bold and ignorant Pretender, let me be punished for my Impudence and Impertinence; but if I have Truth on my Side, I may reasonably

DEDICATION. vii

reasonably expect, on so momentous a Business, to be attended to with some Regard. I shall then, I make no Doubt, be able to shew that, unless we do effectually prevent the *Exportation* of our *Wool*, we must unavoidably be ruin'd; that this can never be done by *Officers*, or by any other Scheme, than by an *Universal Registry* and *Charter*.

I am,

My Lord and Gentlemen,

Your most Respectful

and Obedient humble

Servant to Command

SAMUEL WEBBER.

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A S H O R T
NARRATIVE, &c.

In Some L E T T E R S,

A D D R E S S ' D

To the P R I N T E R of the *Weekly Miscellany*.

L E T T E R I.

I READ in your Paper of the 13th Instant a Letter concerning the *Woollen Manufactures*, wherein the Author of it has mentioned me in such a Manner as requires my thankful Acknowledgement; and his Zeal for the Safety of his *Majesty's Government*, and the Welfare of his *Fellow Subjects*, may claim the kind Acceptance it has met with from the *Publick*. I may without Vanity appeal to my Dealings, for a Course of above forty Years in Trade, and to the many Testimonies which were given of me, for a proof of my Veracity and Integrity; in Confidence of which I presume to send you some Account of the State of our *Woollen Manufacturies*, since my coming into Business to this Time. And this I apprehend to be of the more Use because the Gentlemen, now in Trade, being a New Generation, cannot possibly be supposed to have a just Notion of the former State of them, and the Methods by which they gradually sunk into their present low Condition.

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That

That wise and glorious Princess, Queen *Elizabeth*, gave all manner of Encouragement to the *Woollen Manufacturies*, rightly judging, that thereby the Growth of our Country, and the Labour of our Countrymen, in the way of Trade and Commerce, might bring to GREAT BRITAIN more Wealth than the *Mines* of PERU and MEXICO could produce for the *Spanish* Monarchy. The Success was answerable to the Wisdom of her Measures; Trade flourished, the Subjects grew rich, her Majesty was beloved, the Nation was esteemed and dreaded. But, some Time after, the same Care was not taken for the Encouragement of our *Woollen Trade*, and the Consequence was such as might have been expected. I shall not go back any farther than my own Knowledge and Experience can carry me, which is as far as the *Peace* of *Ryswick*; at which Time I was an *Apprentice* and a *Witness* to the flourishing Condition of our *Woollen-Manufacturies*, and of all other Trades by that Means; of the vast Demand, from *Abroad*, for our Goods; and of the flow of *Spanish* and other *Foreign* Coin, into this Nation, where it was more current than our own. The *present* Age will hardly credit me, (though I can prove it, and am ready to prove it, by undeniable Testimonies) when I assure them, that the *Spanish* and *Dutch* Merchants would come to our Manufacturers Houses in the Country, and buy, with ready Money, all the Goods we could spare from our *home* Consumption; and that we often refused to accept their Money, but kept our Goods in our Warehouses for our Customers at Home. We were not then forc'd to let our Goods lie for a Year or two in *Blackwell Hall*, Moth-eating, at an expence for House-Rent, Factorage, and Discount Money. At this Time *Wooll* yielded the Sheep-Master from 12 to 14 and 16 l. a Pack, and all other Products bore a proportionable Price, as they ever will be found

found to do. This was the then happy State of the Nation ; and from hence I would observe two Things in Answer to two Objections that I have heard made against my Scheme for preventing the Exportation of any unmanufactured Wool, and manufacturing it at Home, *viz.* 1st. that we might find Hands enough to manufacture our own Wool at Home ; and 2dly, that we might have, from *Abroad*, a Demand for all the manufactured Goods that we could spare from our own Consumption. There are as many, and I believe, many more People in the Nation now than there were then, that might be employed in our Manufacturies ; the Nature of our Goods and the Wants of *Foreigners* for such Goods would be the same : So that were there proper Care taken to prevent the Exportation of our Wool, and proper Means used for manufacturing it ourselves, Trade must again, in a few Years, be restored to its former flourishing Condition, and all other Commodities bear a suitable Price ; foreign Money would again find its former Channel, run plentifully into this Kingdom, and by its Circulation enrich every Part of it. I would ask any Man to tell me how it comes to pass that *Portugal* Money is to be seen in almost all Payments. Is it not because *their* Markets are supplied by *us*, and the Balance of Trade, notwithstanding the great Quantities of their Wine that we take in return, is so greatly in our Favour ? What is the Reason that we see so little of other Foreign Coin, but only this, that *their* Markets, which were formerly supplied with *our* Manufactures, are now supplied by others ? But if we do, as we may do, prevent the Exportation of our Wool, we shall put it out of their Power to make those Goods, and consequently oblige them to buy them of us.

L E T T E R II.

IF after what has been said, the Intelligent Reader could be in any doubt whether we have Hands enough to Manufacture all our Wool at Home, let me inform him, upon the Credit of a noble Peer, a true Patriot of his Country, who took the Pains, for the publick Good, to procure an Estimate of the Number of the Poor on the Parish Rates in *England*, made but four Years ago, that it amounted then to One Million, Four Hundred Thousand; of which Number Three Hundred Thousand were reckon'd to be Orphans, and Persons incapable of Work; and the remaining One Million, one Hundred Thousand, fit for Labour: and it ought to be observ'd, that many who are incapable of Labour, or Work that requires much Strength, may be able to do something in the *Woollen Manufacturies*. This was not the miserable State of the Poor while *they* were in a flourishing one. It may be worth while to enquire into the Beginning of their Declension.

The Year before the Peace of *Ryswick*, the *English*, jealous lest *Ireland*, by being able to Work Woollen Goods cheaper than *they* could do, would by that Means supplant them in *Foreign Markets*, took the following Occasion to Cramp their free Trade with other Nations, which they then enjoyed. *England*, having reduced *Ireland*, and restor'd to the *Protestants* their Estates, at that Time in the Hands of the *Papists*, the *Irish* agreed to pay Three Millions of the Nine Millions Expence which that Expedition cost *England*, but finding it difficult to raise the Money, it was agreed between them that *England* should bear that whole Expence, and that *Ireland* should lay a Tax of four Shillings in the Pound on all *Woollen Goods* exported to *Foreign Markets*.
Upon

Upon this, *England* became fearful that the *Irish*, not having, as before, the Opportunity of their *Foreign* Trade, might Prejudice the *English* Manufacturies by Importing Woollen Goods to *England* cheaper than we could have made them here: And, therefore, they prohibited the Importation of *Woollen* Goods from *Ireland* to *England*, except only to the five Wooll Ports; and subjected all such Goods to Duties laid on them by antecedent Acts; the Consequence of all which was this; the four Shillings in the Pound, laid by the *Irish* Parliament on all *Woollen* Goods imported from *Ireland* to *Foreign* Markets, made it impracticable for them to deal with *other* Nations, while the Duties, laid by the *English* Parliament on all such Goods imported from thence to *England*, made it as impossible for them to deal, upon Terms of any Profit, with us.

What now could the *Irish* do? Not having a proper Vent for their *Manufactured Goods*, they were glad to seek out for *Foreign* Customers for their *Unmanufactured Wool*. Thus we subverted the *Irish* Manufacturies, but at the same Time gave a great Advantage to an Enemy, much more formidable than the *Irish* could have been, to our *English* Trade. For *France* took this Opportunity of getting Wool *comb'd* from the *Irish*, who were willing to do something, at least, towards *Manufacturing* it. The Method of Running it was, by skrewing it into Calks, with Shot covered with Butter, in order to reduce it to a proper Weight. And, as the *French* thus got *comb'd* Wool from *Ireland*, so upon disbanding the Army at the Peace of *Ryswick*, where were several Soldiers brought up to the *Woollen* Trade, and then destitute of a Maintenance, *France* gave them Encouragement to go over; by which Means they not only got *Materials* and useful *Hands* to assist them in carrying on their Manufacturies, but ingenious and experienced *Heads* to instruct them in the

the best Methods of Improvement. This was the Beginning of the Growth of *their* Manufacturies, and the *Decrease* of *ours*, though both were at that Time very small in comparison of what they are now. However by sending their Goods to *Foreign* Markets, they lessened the Demand for *ours*, and lowered the Price; so much, that Wool fell from 14 and 16 Pounds a Pack, to 9 and 11.

Soon after this a War ensued, and the *French* were at a Loss for Wool; they had little or none but what they took with their *Privateers*. I was at that Time in Trade for myself, and had considerable Dealings, so that I was a Judge of the then State of our Consumption, and the Price of Goods. We had at this Time, 1703, to our selves, the Cloathing of all the known World, except those with whom we were at War; Goods were demanded as fast as we could make them; we had our own Price for them; and Wool rose again from 9 and 11 Pounds, to 12 and 14 a Pack. I desire the Reader would bear one thing in Mind all the way, that not only the Demand for our Goods *Abroad* was greatest, but the Price of *them*, and of *unmanufactured Wool* at *Home* was highest, when the least Wool was exported *unmanufactured*.

L E T T E R III.

AS I observed, the War, which hindred the *French* from having any *Quantities* of our *Wool*, raised the Price of it at *Home*, and encreased the Demand, from *Abroad*, for our *manufactured* Goods; and the Demand continued for three or four Years, so that we had a Sale for all that we made; but then, about 1707, the Prices of our Goods sunk, and Wool was fallen from 12 and 14 *l*.

a Pack to 9 and 11 *l.* — I could not immediately discern the Cause of this Fall; but in 1708, whilst I and several more were waiting for a Convoy, a *popish* Merchant, of my Acquaintance, who freighted his Ship with Wool some time after us, fell down to the Passage in order to go off with that Tide, being resolved, as he said, to lose no Time in staying for the Convoy, but venture without it. He did so; and we soon heard that he was taken by the *French*. Within a Fortnight's Time he brought back the empty Vessel, which he pretended to have *ransomed*, having left the Wool in *France*. He freighted his Ship again with *Wool*, ventured again without a Convoy, whilst we lay still waiting for one, and he was taken again by the *French*. I knew this Man's Circumstances to be such that he had neither Money nor Credit sufficient to sustain such Losses, or to pay such *Ransoms*. But, soon after, in the Year 1709, I discover'd the Roguery of thus venturing the *Run*, as they call it, without a Convoy. I dealt in Company with a Merchant, who, being disappointed of his Freight, offer'd to be concerned with me, if I would join with him, in *Running* Wool to *France*; assuring me that for three Pounds we might have a *French Pass* (as well as I remember) from a Person who lived at *Edinburgh*; which Passes, if the Ship fell into the Hands of the *Privateers*, were not to be produced 'till they arrived in some Harbour in *France*, lest they should be *Jersey* or *Guernsey* Privateers. I refused his Offer, but this explained to me the Reason of the fall of our *Wool* (to 8 *l.* 10 *s.* and 9 *l.*) and the decrease of our *Trade*. By these Methods, as well as by *Captures*, the *French* got a Quantity of our Wool to mix with their coarse Wool (not worth above 2 *l.* or 2 *l.* 10 *s.* a Pack) so that they were able, at a cheaper Rate, to supply Foreign Markets which used to buy our Goods. Thus stood the State of our *Wool* and
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Woollen Manufacturies in Great Britain about the Year 1712; and thus it continued to decline 'till the *Plague* broke out in *France*; at which Time *Wool* was fallen to 7 *l.* or 7 *l.* 10 *s.* a Pack. From 1712 to this Period, 1719, or thereabouts, besides the *Wool* exported wholly unmanufactured, Numbers, Thousands of *Combers* were employed (a great many of them I myself knew personally) by the *Papists* in *Ireland*, which they sent to *France*; and if any happened to be seized by inferior Officers, or others, it was as constantly discharged, and suffered to go Abroad. But the *Plague* above-mentioned put a Stop to all Intercourse with *France*; during which Time, while they could get none of our *Wool*, it rose from 7 *l.* and 7 *l.* 10 *s.* a Pack to 11 *l.* or 12 *l.* Our Goods were again called for as fast as we could make them, and we sold them at whatever Price we thought fit to set upon them. These are undeniable Facts, and these Facts undeniably shew not only the true Causes of the decay of our Trade, but the certain Method by which it may be redeem'd. The *French*, in proportion to the Quantity of *Wool* which they have been able to get from us, have more or less, supplanted us in Foreign Markets, and underfold us; hinder them from getting any more of our *Wool*, and the Demand for our Goods Abroad, and the Price of them must unavoidably rise to their former Height. — Thus I have brought down my short Narrative of the Rise and Fall of the Price of *Wool*, of the Growth and Decrease of the *Woollen Trade*, to the ceasing of the *Plague*. After the *Plague* was over, and Commerce with *France* renewed, our *Wool* sunk again from 11 *l.* and 12 *l.* a Pack to 7 *l.* or 7 *l.* 10 *s.* and has ever since been gradually sinking 'till it is now fallen to 4 *l.* 10 *s.* and 5 *l.* a Pack. For *Wool* has been exported in much greater Quantities for several Years last past, chiefly occasioned by the Connivance, or Neglect of Officers;

Officers; and it is computed that at this Time *France* has, of our Wool, yearly, 300,000 Packs; from which Computation I can demonstrate that *they* get yearly, while *we*, yearly, lose the getting above 8,000,000 *l.* But if, according to Calculations formerly made, *Great Britain* and *Ireland* produce, yearly, 800,000 Packs of Wool, which I believe to be true, then *France* has yearly from us 500,000 Packs. What shews my Calculation to be right is this: I suppose nobody imagines that any of our Wool is destroyed. What is not *manufactured* at Home is sold to *Foreigners*. There can be no more *manufactured* than what is *combed*, *scribbled*, and *carded*; but there are not now a *third* Part of the Number of *Combers*, *Scriblers*, and *Carders* in *England* and *Ireland* which we had in the Year 1698; and even that small Number has not full Employment. From hence judge of the present flourishing Condition of the *Woollen* Manufacturies of our *Enemies*, the *French*, and of the *Riches* arising to them from their *Trade*. The deplorable Condition of our *own* Manufacturies, with the dreadful Consequences of their Decay, it is very melancholy, but as necessary to consider, as it is timely to repair.

L E T T E R. IV.

IF *Wool* was Sold at *Home* for 14 and 16 *l.* a Pack when our Trade was in a flourishing Condition, and has continued ever since to rise and fall regularly in proportion to the *Exports* of our *manufactured* Goods, the present low Price of it shews the great decay of our *Trade*. As I observed, it now sells (unless it be such as is made fit for Manufacturing, and that may fetch 6 *l.*) for 5 and 4 *l.* 10 *s.* a Pack; from whence it is evident that we have not one third Part of our *Wool* MANUFACTURED at

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Home, or one third Part of the Quantity of Goods carried to *Foreign Markets*, which we formerly had, and might have again carried thither, if the Exportation of our *Unmanufactur'd Wool* were effectually prevented: And for want of this Demand from *Abroad* what scarcity of Money must such a prodigious decay of the *Staple Commodity* of the Nation occasion! And for want of Employment what Numbers of ruined and necessitous People must be beholden to their several Parishes for a Maintenance, thereby adding greatly to the Load of our *Rates*, at the same time rendering us less able to bear it!—That this is a right way of Reasoning, appears from *Fact*, since the Circulation of Coin, and the Number of Poor, have always been equal to the Quantity of Goods *manufactured* at *Home*, and sold *Abroad*; if so, the present scarcity of Money, felt and complained of universally, and the numerous Poor among us, prove the great decay of *Trade*. As we may argue from the *latter*, as from a *known Cause*, so we may as justly reason from the *former*, as from a *certain Effect*. They prove each other, backward and forward.—And what makes this our distressed Condition doubly distressed, is this; that those *Riches* and that *Strength* which we lose are gained by our potent ambitious *Neighbours*, and irreconcilable *Enemies*, the *French*, (our Interests being opposite) who will be watchful to lay hold of every Opportunity to ruin us; and *now* stand *Neuter* only to impoverish us still the more by the farther Destruction of our *Trade*; thus deferring the Stroke 'till they can strike more effectually. That they get the Trade which we lose, is undeniable, because whenever we have been at Variance with *them*, and they could not get our *Unmanufactured Wool*, the rise of our Trade *Abroad* has immediately been quick and great. These Facts, already cited in this Narrative, I know to be true, and

and so does every one that has known Business as long as I have done.—But to go on with the Account of our present State of the *Woollen Trade*. It appears not only from the great scarcity of *Money*, and the Number of *Poor* (there being above *Eleven Hundred Thousand* capable of *Work*, upon the *Parish Rates*) but from the general Testimony of the *Woollen Manufacturers* from all Parts of the Kingdom, and from an Argument still more convincing than their *Testimony*, from the Numbers that are daily *breaking*, and others leaving off Trade in Time, that they might not waste what they had acquir'd in better Times. Here, also, I assert nothing but what I can witness the Truth of: And, I, myself, am one of those who *Traded* 'till I could Trade no longer without *losing* by my Business. I do assure the *Publick*, upon the Word and Faith of a *Christian*, that, though I may presume to understand it as well as most Men, if any one would give me *Wool*, upon Condition that I should *work* it, I would not accept it; because if I proposed to get any thing by it I should be forc'd to use Methods so oppressive to the poor *Workmen* as my Nature could not bear. As I was desired by so many Thousands to interest my self in this Affair, several of the distress'd *Workmen* have applied to me with their melancholly Complaints; and I am inform'd that the following Methods of Oppression are practic'd by *Masters*; not so much, perhaps, from a *cruel* or *avaritious* Temper, as from *Necessity*. Not having a Subsistence without Trade, they were willing to continue it, tho' their *Returns* were so small, and the *Prices* of their Goods so low, that they could not live by it, without lowering the Price of *Labour* to such a Degree that the *Labourers* cannot possibly subsist upon their *Wages*; all which is owing to the *French's* being able to GLUT Foreign Markets, and

undersell us, by reason of the great *Quantities* of their *own* cheap Wool which they can mix with *ours*, and the cheapness of *their* Labourers *Rents* and *Food*; many of whom live only upon *Bread* and *Garlick*. The Methods are these. — If the Master has any Goods that are Moth-eaten, braided, scorched in the Press, torn in the Tenters, or on any other Account unfit for Sale, he obliges his Labourers to take them at double the Price which they can get for them; and as a Security to the *Master* that they shall take these Goods, every one of his Labourers deposits one Shilling in his Hand, deducted out of his Labour. In other Places the *Masters* oblige each Labourer to return, out of his Wages, one Shilling a Week, without allowing them any Goods for it; some doing this under the Pretence of a *Lodging*, though the Labourers have no such thing; and others, without the Formality of any Pretence at all, taking it only for *employing* them. And to make the most of this cruel, oppressive Scheme, they employ thirty two Men a Week to do the Work only of *twelve*, that they may have the Benefit of the Deduction of thirty two Shillings: By which Means it has happen'd that a poor Labourer at the Week's End has had but Four-pence Half-penny for the Support of himself and Family; as one of them told me but last *Saturday* that he is ready to appear before the *Parliament* to make Affidavit of it. A Sense of Compassion towards such miserable Sufferers cannot but tenderly affect the Hearts of all Persons that have either *Christian Charity*, or *common Humanity*; but every Subject of *Great Britain* is more sensibly affected, by this deplorable State of our *Trade*, from Reasons of *Self-Interest*, drawn from the Consequences of such a total decay of our *Woollen Manufacturies*, upon the *publick Welfare*, and the Safety of the *Government*: For, to this it

is chiefly owing (though Persons, unacquainted with the *Nature of Commerce* and the *Circulation of Trade*, do not see the *Original Cause* of those Evils which they feel) that in *London* and in other *Towns* so many *Tradesmen* fail, so many *Houses* stand empty, so little *Business* and less *Money* is stirring; that in the *Country* so many *Farmers* are forced to leave their *Farms*, or have considerable *Abatements* made in their *Rents*, and that so many of them break indebted to their *Landlords*; that in all *Markets* the *Prices* of their *Commodities* are lowered so much beyond what they bore when the *Poor*, by being employed, had more *Money* to go to *Market* with, and *others*, by the *Circulation of Foreign Money*, imported hither in return for the *Labour* of our *Workmen*, could afford to buy more *Goods*, give a better *Price*, and pay better for them. Whereas, now, in *Prudence* they must make shift without many *Conveniences*, as well as *Superfluities*, or contract *Debts* which they cannot discharge. This is our present *Evil State*; and this *State* is owing to the *Exportation of Unmanufactured Wool to France*. That some *immediate Remedy* ought to be applied, every one will own, if he be a *Friend to his King*, his *Country*, or *himself*. It is very plain that the *Laws*, now in *Being*, are not sufficient to prevent such *Exportation*. If it be ask'd, why they are not as effectual, as they used to be formerly, the *Answer* is short and easy. *Religion* is at as low an *Ebb* as *Trade*. When *Conscience* had its proper *Influence*, and *Men* had a *Sense of Duty*, they would not make free with *Oaths*, or sell their *King* and *Country*, for their *private Advantage*. That *Cement* of *Society* being dissolv'd, that *Barrier* of publick *Good* destroyed, *personal Interest* takes *Place* of the *National* one, and the most *sacred Obligations* give way to *avaritious* and *ambitious Views*. It is worth while for *France* to give *large Premiums* to bribe *Of-*
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ficers, and in such *corrupted* Times Officers will not have *Honesty* enough to refuse them; as appears too evidently from Experience. The State of the *French* Manufacturies are a Proof that they *have* our *Wool* in large Quantities, because they could not have improved them without it. An *Account* of them was *published*, (though *soon* out of Print) in a *Journal* of Mr. *Mun*'s; from whence the *Daily Post* three Months ago made an Abstract. But a *Servant* of my own, who fled for Debt to *France*, and was employed in their Manufacturies, has assured me that they can have any Quantity of our *Wool* that they want. In the room, therefore, of *Officers*, who, besides their liableness to *Corruption*, are very *expensive* to the Nation, I have offered my Scheme, of an *Universal Registry*; which, under any *Penalty* whatsoever, I am ready, before the *Parliament*, or any Number of the Court of *Aldermen* and *Common Council*, to defend; and shew it to be as *effectual*, as it is easy and familiar; adapted to the Nature of our Constitution, and the Liberty of the Subject. — Since I began this Letter I have met with some Objections against my *Calculations* and *Scheme*; and the next Week an Answer to them shall conclude what I have to say on this important Subject; and I shall think my self happy if I can offer any thing that may be instrumental in saving so many Families from Ruin, promoting the Welfare and Prosperity of the Nation, and securing to us our Religious and Civil Rights under the Government of his present Majesty and his Royal Issue.

L E T T E R. V.

THE first Objection that I shall take Notice of, concerns the *Quantity* of *Unmanufactured* *Wool* *exported*. It is said, that we do not export above

144000

144000 Pounds worth of Goods from *London*, and I imagine that the rest of the Nation (since the Establishment of *Blackwell-Hall*) may not export more than that Quantity. From whence it is argued, that *Great Britain* and *Ireland* do not produce 800000 Packs of Wool. But, with most humble Submission to those worthy Gentlemen, who make this Objection, it proves nothing more than the Decay of Trade. If they will turn back to the Exports of our Manufacturies in the Times of their *Prosperity* when *France* had not our *Unmanufactured Wool*, they'll find them to be exceeding large. To give one Instance. In the Year 1698, at *Bristol Fair*, only, in eight Days time the *Dutch* and *Spanish* Merchants and Factors bought above 150000 Pounds worth of *Woollen Goods*; besides what was carried from *Bridge-water* in a *Dutch Dogger*. *Minehead*, *Barnstable*, *Bitbeford*, *Topsbam*, or *Exon*; along the *South Channel*, *London*, *Bocking* and *Braintry*, *Norwich* and *Yarmouth*, we have all imaginable Reason to conclude, sold proportionable Quantities for Exportation. Besides what was exported from *Ireland* (who then had a free Trade) by *Dutch* and *Spanish* Merchants and Factors, from *Cork*, *Youghall*, *Waterford* and *Dublin*, that I knew of; as also, great Quantities of Sheep's grey and white *Frizes* and *Stockings*. I much question whether *Taunton* has now above 30000 *l.* Stock in the *Woollen* Manufacturies, and whether, thro' the badness of the Times, they can turn their Money more than once a Year, whereas at the above-mentioned Period they had four times as much, and could turn their Money four times a Year. 'Tis the same at *Froom*, &c. The small Exports from *London* and other Parts, of late Years, can't disprove the Facts which I have cited, but only shew that our former Trade is lost; as the State of the *French* Manufacturies shew that *they* have got it, and by the Means of our *Unmanufactured Wool*, without which
they

they could not possibly have improved their Trade. What the exact Quantity of Wool, produced in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, is, we can never tell, without an *Universal Registry*, but all experienc'd Dealers, who have had the best Opportunities of making an Estimate, for forty Years together, have agreed to lay it at about 800000 Packs. However, be the Quantity what it will, since it is sufficient, if exported, *Unmanufactured*, to *France*, to impoverish and enslave us, we shall be unpardonably wanting to our own Safety and Happiness, if we any longer neglect to prevent the Exportation of it, which never can be done effectually, but by an *Universal Registry*; and that not in the Hands of *Officers*, but in *Trade*.

Mr. *Hambleton*, the Projector, has proposed a Scheme, which would effectually make Slaves of us. He would have a Number of *Officers* to purchase all the Growth of *British* and *Irish* Wool; by which he shews that either he knows nothing of the true Interest and Welfare of his Country, or has no Regard to them. For, first, I would ask him where he would find a sufficient Number of Officers of Skill and Honesty enough to *distinguish* the Value of every Pack of Wool, and to give the Proprietors the proper Price for it. If we should be so happy as to prevent the Exportation of our Wool, it would rise again to 12, 14, and 16 *l.* a Pack; but by this Scheme the Proprietors must lose the Benefit of a *rising* Market, because these *Officers* can set what Price they please upon it; and the *Manufacturers* who must buy it of *them*, will be saddled with a most exorbitant Price, or else they'll sell it to *France*, where they can make a better Bargain. But, as some Persons of great Account, have insinuated to me, the *French* being our *good Allies*, it is our *Interest* to let them have our Wool. That is, in plain *English*, it is our Interest, to make them a Compliment of our Wealth and Strength; and in Regard to their great Love and Generosity towards us,

to make them our *Masters*; and put it in their Power to do what they please with us. Oh, but we shall *disoblige* them, if we keep our Wool from them. That is, they are such *heartly Friends* to us, that, unless we give them our Estates, become *Beggars*, that *they* may be *Rich*; *Slaves*, that *they* may accomplish their Views of *Universal Monarchy*; unless, I say, you'll grant them these few *reasonable* Things, they'll be very angry and quarrel with you.

Others, from better Motives, object that there is no Occasion for an *Universal Registry*, since in many Parishes there are not Sheep enough to make it worth while.

To this Objection I answer in few Words; *first*, that if there were any Parishes left without a *Registry*, FRANCE would soon find out Ways of getting Wool carried thither for *their* Use. *Secondly*, That Manufacturies would extend themselves (to the great Improvement of the Gentlemen's Estates, without their running any Hazards in the planting them) which would occasion an increase of the Wool in many Parishes where now there is but little.

Other well-meaning People are afraid of laying a Burthen upon those who are to keep the *Registries*, and likewise upon the *Proprietors* who may be plagued by the Ill-nature and Impertinence of the *Registers*.

This holds equally against obliging the Subjects to sustain *any* Office of *Trouble* for the *publick Good*, and against all Laws, however beneficial upon the whole, because in particular Instances the Execution of them may be attended with some Inconveniencies. All the Inconveniencies (which are only *imaginary*) that the *Ignorant* can suppose to arise to the *Proprietors* are no Balance against the vast Advantages that would accrue to them. And as to the *Registers*, they will be so far from thinking their Office any Hardship, that they will be thankful for it; and that, too, without the least Oppression upon the *Publick*.

A certain Great Man told me, there was no Occasion for an *Universal Registry* to prevent the Exportation of Wool, when we might command Foreign Markets by *lowering English Labour*.—But, is it not a much shorter Way, to hinder our Neighbours from carrying any Goods thither, and by that Means keeping the Markets intirely to our selves, and fixing our own Prices?—Neither is it possible, while the *French* have our Wool, to lower our Wages so much as to be able to *underfell* them; as I have already shewn. Our Labour is so low already that our Labourers can't subsist --- and if we *could* do it, the Nation would be the Losers by it; provided, we lowered the Price of our Goods proportionably. Whoever knows any thing of *Trade*, knows, that the *Riches* of a Trading Nation arise from the *Labour* of the People; and consequently that the *higher* the *Wages* for manufacturing Goods that are Sold *Abroad*, the more Riches are brought into the Country, because *Foreigners* pay for the Labour.

The last Objection that I shall mention, arises purely from a Mistake of the *Fact*. They urge, that it is *monopolizing Trade*, if it be granted, as it is requested, in *Charter*. But it is proposed that every one shall have the Liberty of *Manufacturing Goods*, upon Condition only that he *Registers* the Wool, according to my Scheme, lest, under a Pretence of making Cloth for the Use of his Family, he should *run Wool*. All the *Monopoly* that the Proprietors under the Charter will enjoy, will be, the Care of seeing the *Registry* faithfully executed, so as to Answer the Purposes intended by it.

N. B. If any Gentleman, Merchant, or Tradesman of Character, wants to be farther satisfied, as to any Part of my Scheme, if he pleases to give me Notice by a Penny Post Letter, directed to me at *Eure-street, Gravel-Lane, Southwark*, I'll wait on him.

A SCHEME to prevent the *Exportation* of *Unmanufactured* W O O L.

I. **I**T is humbly proposed, That a Registry be established in every Parish, throughout *Great Britain, and Ireland, &c.* and that the Parish-Clerk, Tything-man or Overseer of the Poor, (either of them as shall be thought proper by Parliament) be appointed Register of each of the respective Parishes, who shall register all Wool grown in, brought in, sold out, pulled-off Skins manufactured; what Stocks, and in whose Hands---Either of these Men being most fit to serve, they knowing within a few Sheep what any Person keeps or shears in their respective Parishes; and if altered out of the Parish, to give Permits. Charge of Registering from One Pack to any Number, if One Man's Property, to be but Two-pence, and for Permit Two-pence.

II. ALL Sheep-masters in Hours after shearing their Sheep or Lambs, on Pain of shall repair to the Register of their Parish, and give a true Account of the Number of Fleeces, and the Weight of all their Wool to be registred to his Account, with a Duty of 5 s. per Pound, which is about the Value of Labour to manufacture it, and there remain chargeable, till sold; and before the Property is altered, on Pain of to Buyer and Seller, repair to the Register's Office of that Parish where bought, and register it to the Buyer's Account, with the said Duty, discharging the former Proprietor; and if altered out the Parish, to take the Register's Permit: And so from Hand to Hand, as bought or sold, till made appear it is thoroughly manufactured, and then fully discharged.

N. B. This Duty charged is never Money out of Stock to fair Traders, but charged to pin it down; which will put it out of the Power of

Foreigners to tempt, or Owlers or others to furnish them with any more unmanufactured Wool, Worsted, or Yarn from *Great Britain, Ireland, &c.*

III. ALL Fell-mongers, or others pulling Wool off Skins, as soon as dry, shall in Manner aforesaid register the Number of Skins and Weight thereof, with the Duty as afore charged to their Account; and so from Hand to Hand, as bought or sold, till made appear thoroughly manufactured, then fully discharged.

IV. ALL Persons buying	Pounds of
Worsted or Yarn, on Pain of	to Buyer

and Seller, before the Property is altered, shall repair to the Register of the Parish, and register it to the Buyer's Account, with the Duty aforesaid, discharging the former Proprietor for so much; and if altered out of the Parish, take the Register's Permit; and so from Hand to Hand, as bought or sold, till made appear thoroughly manufactured, then fully discharged.

N. B. V. WHEREAS several Worsted and Yarn-makers for Hose, Caps and Crewils, &c. often sell it by the Ounce, it is proposed that they shall make Oath once a Quarter before the Register, and Three or more of their Parishioners who best know their Characters and Dealings, that to the best of their Knowledge all the Wool they bought that Quarter, was and is to be manufactured thoroughly in these His Majesty's Dominions; and that such Oaths so taken shall discharge the Duty aforesaid.

VI. No Foreigner, on any Pretence, if not a Subject and an Inhabitant of *Great Britain or Ireland, &c.* to buy Wool, Worsted, or Yarn, on Pain of Forfeiture of the said Goods, and six times the Value, such Foreigner, being convicted before the Register and three Parishioners, to be imprisoned, the Penalty to be the Prize of the Informer.

VII. A N Y

VII. ANY Parishioner, paying Parish Rates, shall, on Demand, inspect the Register's Accounts; and if he does discover Fraud, report the same at the next Quarter Sessions to the Bench of Justices for that County wherein their Parish is, who shall adjudge, fine, and punish Offenders.

VIII. ALL Registers to give Attendance from Seven in the Morning till Twelve at Noon, and from Two till Five in the Evening, except the Hours of Service at Church; and if Neglect or Fraud is committed by the Register, or against the Registry to be adjudged, fined and punished by the Bench of Justices, at the next Quarter Sessions, held for that County where the Offence is committed, without Lawyer or Law-suits; but the Complainant to set forth by Petition to the Bench of Justices, and the Defendant to make his Defence without Solicitor or Lawyer: No Clerks or others to extort or demand Fees on Pain of -----This is suiting my Scheme to our Constitution, as near as I was capable; for every honest Man is willing to be judged by his Neighbours, who best know him in his Dealings; for therein a Man is best known.

IX. EVERY Register throughout *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, &c. in their respective Counties, under Pain of shall the second Day of each Quarter Sessions for ever, deliver in to the Bench of Justices a true Account of all Wool grown in, brought in, and pulled off Skins and Weight thereof sold out manufactured; what Stocks, and in whose Hands in each of their respective Parishes.

X. AND on Pain of to the Justices of Peace in each County omitting throughout these His Majesty's Dominions every Year sending up an attested Copy of all the Registers Accounts, to the Honourable the Commons of *Great Britain* in Parliament assembled, the first Week of their Sitting, that they may have the Account of the Growth and Manufacture

Manufacture of all the Wool of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*; which will set the Inspection above the Possibility of Frauds which Officers might be tempted to practise.

XI. THAT as many Ports be opened in *England* and *Ireland*, for Exporting or Importing Wool, Worsted, Yarn, or any Species of Woolen manufactured Goods from *Ireland*, for the Benefit of the fair Trader, as shall be thought requisite by the Wisdom of Parliament.

XII. THAT none but *English* Owners do freight with Wool, Worsted, Yarn, or any Species of Woolen manufactured Goods from *Ireland*; and those Ships first to be registred before the Bench of Justices, at the Quarter Sessions for that County wherein the Parish and Abode of the Owners is, the better to know their Characters, and whether they and their Sureties Circumstance are answerable for the Obligation they enter into.

XIII. THAT such Master of Vessel shall repair to the proper Register, on Pain of and register all the Wool, Worsted, Yarn, or Woolen manufactured Goods from *Ireland* she freights withal, with a Duty of 5 s. per Pound, charged to the Ship and Owners Account, discharging the former Proprietors; and when cleared His Majesty's Customhouse, sail as consigned, and so remain chargeable till an Account arrives from such Registers where imported; then charged to them to whom she is consign'd, discharging the said Vessel, and as before, register here in *England* from Hand to Hand, as bought or sold, till it appears to be thoroughly manufactured, then fully discharged.

XIV. THAT an Account shall be sent, on a certain Penalty to any Register who neglects, the last Day of every Month, where such Goods were imported, to all those Registers from whence exported, the Ships, Masters, and Owners Names, with just Returns

Returns of their Bills of Lading, compared with their Books from whence exported, which will make appear if any is run, allowing Time for Performance of the Voyage: Postage free on this Affair.

XV. THAT any Ship missing, the Owners, Sureties, Master and Men be sued and prosecuted at His Majesty's Suit and Charge, except made plain appear she was wreckt at Sea; which if it should happen on any Shore out of His Majesty's Dominions, they shall not break Bulk; and if they cannot save the Vessel, (if it can be done with Safety to their Lives) shall set Fire to her, and burn the Cargo, to prevent its falling into Foreigners Hands, on Pain of them and their Sureties being prosecuted as if illegally exporting it.

XVI. IN case of War no Ship laden with Wool, Worsted, Yarn, or any Species of Woollen Manufacturies from *Ireland*, shall sail without Convoy, and obey Sailing Orders on Pain of the Owners and Sureties being prosecuted as if illegally exporting it: For designing Men, with *French* passes, used last Wars to run into Privateers Hands; and what has been, may be again.

XVII. WHEN Three Ships or more are freighted with Wool, &c. from *Ireland*, the Cargoes registred, and cleared at his Majesty's Custom-House, the Captain stationed for Convoy, on Days Notice given, shall sail next fair Wind, on Pain of such Captain being for ever rendered incapable of serving His Majesty; and such Merchants shall recover their Damage of him by their Action at Law. The Projector of this Scheme, SAMUEL WEBBER, suffered in the Year 1708 by such Neglect of Captain Wade Commander of the *Adventure*, then stationed and in Harbour with us; as did Mr. *Bambury*, Mr. *Cochill* of *Bytheford*, the two *Lakes*, sen. and jun. Mr. *Hesterbrock*, Mr. *Pyke*, and Mr. *Hogg* of *Appledow*, Mr. *Warman* of *Barnstable*, Eight Ships more from

from *Bristol* and *Minehead*, all which can be proved by living Witnesses.----I am sensible of my Imperfections, but would humbly beg your Honours to supply my Defects. It might be expected in Sea-Ports of much Business, to allow somewhat more to Registers, wherever it can be done without clogging Trade; for the Property of the private Subject, as well as the publick Interest of His Majesty, and of the Nation, is what I build my Projection upon.

P O S T C R I P T.

AS the Woollen Manufacturers justly observe, the Act obtained last Sessions to bring *Irish* Yarn hither, Duty free, will not prevent the Exportation of our *Unmanufactured* Wool to *Foreigners*, and therefore it would prove highly prejudicial to our Worsted and Yarn Makers; but if the Nation should be so happy as to have an Act pass'd for an *Universal Registry* of all the Growth of great *Britain's* and *Ireland's* Wool, then to let *Ireland* send their Yarn, and Wool, both *Duty free*, will be of great Advantage to his Majesty and *British* Subjects, and be a sufficient Inducement to the *Irish* Parliament and Nation to comply with an *Universal Registry*.

F I N I S.

